

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COURTHOUSE CORNERSTONES

2019 TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM UPDATE

CELEBRATING
20 YEARS OF
PRESERVATION



THC CHAIRMAN
JOHN L. NAU, III
ON HISTORIC TEXAS
COURTHOUSES

In 1999, the State of Texas confronted an issue that had been developing for years. Six years earlier, the beloved Hill County Courthouse—part of the history of the community for 103 years—burned virtually to the ground. More than a place where people paid parking tickets or stored records, the courthouse was the heart of Hillsboro and Hill County. In a single evening, a century of history was lost.

Hill County rebuilt its courthouse with locally raised funds and a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. But the challenge remained—what to do with all the other historic county courthouses? Many faced threats from fire safety infrastructure and other code compliance issues, harsh Texas weather, and the ravages of time.

Then-Governor George W. Bush and state legislators created a plan in 1999 to provide regular rounds of grant funding for historic courthouses across the state. The next year, we awarded the first of those grants.

The rest is history. Since the beginning of the program almost 20 years ago, the Texas Historical Commission has worked with 70 counties to help fund and supervise full restorations of their historic courthouses, including significant upgrades to security, safety, and technology infrastructure. This ensures the buildings will continue to serve their communities for generations to come.

These courthouses are not just symbols of county history and Texas justice. While laden with symbolism, the courthouses make real contributions to a community’s culture and economic success. They host events and attract visitors from across the state, nation, and world. They serve as backdrops for popular movies and television shows.

Our Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program also promotes the value of historic preservation. Preservation builds community partnerships, bringing together governments, citizens, and businesses to celebrate a community’s rich heritage. And preservation educates a new generation about how people lived, played, worked, and worshiped in the past.

In these pages you will discover all the work we have done in the past biennium to preserve the precious history of our historic courthouses. I hope the next time you are on a day trip or sightseeing expedition, you will stop by and visit one or more of these Texas treasures. You will find there as deep a connection to Texas history as any you will discover.

TEXAS HISTORIC
COURTHOUSE
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM
HISTORY

MAY 28, 1971	Governor Preston Smith signs into law House Bill 22 of the 62nd Legislature, saying “no county may demolish, sell, lease, or damage” the historical or architectural integrity of its courthouse within 180 days after notice to the Texas Historical Commission
JANUARY 1, 1993	Fire nearly destroys Hill County Courthouse, generating statewide interest in historic county courthouse preservation
JUNE 1998	National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) adds historic Texas courthouses to Most Endangered Places list
APRIL 24, 1999	Hill County Courthouse rededicated
MAY 31, 1999	Governor George W. Bush, 76th Legislature create Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP); \$50 million in general revenue (GR) appropriated for Round I grants
MAY 4, 2000	Texas Historical Commission awards Round I grants
MAY 28, 2001	77th Legislature appropriates \$50 million GR for Round III grants
NOVEMBER 6, 2001	Texas voters pass Proposition 8 (House Joint Resolution 97, 77th Legislature) approving general obligation (GO) bonds to support THCPP
JUNE 2, 2003	78th Legislature appropriates \$45 million GO bonds for THCPP
NOVEMBER 2004	Association for Preservation Technology International awards Presidential Citation to THCPP
MAY 30, 2005	79th Legislature appropriates \$80 million of transportation enhancement funds for THCPP; Federal Highway Administration denies use of funds
MAY 28, 2007	80th Legislature appropriates \$62 million GO bonds for THCPP
NOVEMBER 6, 2007	Texas voters pass Proposition 4 (Senate Joint Resolution 65, 80th Legislature) approving additional GO bonds for THCPP
MAY 2008	President George W. Bush presents Preserve America Presidential Award to THCPP at the White House
JUNE 1, 2009	81st Legislature appropriates \$20 million GO bonds for THCPP
MAY 30, 2011	82nd Legislature appropriates \$20 million GO bonds for THCPP
JUNE 2012	Historic Texas courthouses again named to NTHP Most Endangered Places list
MAY 27, 2013	83rd Legislature appropriates \$4.2 million, balance of GO bonds, for THCPP; smaller Round VIII grants address critical infrastructure and safety issues
JUNE 1, 2015	84th Legislature appropriates \$20 million GR for THCPP
MAY 25, 2017	85th Legislature appropriates \$20.2 million for THCPP



WE'VE COME A LONG WAY...

1993 got off to a depressing start for Texas' preservation community. On January 1, the 1890 Hill County Courthouse in Hillsboro suffered a devastating fire. Only the shell of the beautiful French Second Empire-style building remained. But the community rallied by raising money (including two charity concerts by Hill County native Willie Nelson) and securing grants to restore the building to its original design.

That fire sparked concern about the fate of Texas' beloved historic courthouses, which faced a number of additional threats—including water damage, structural deficiencies, deterioration, the presence of construction materials now known to be hazardous, and mold. The fire was the impetus for the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), created in 1999 by former Governor George W. Bush and the Texas Legislature.

In the 20 years since, we've accomplished a lot. Seventy full courthouse restorations have been funded (with 64 of those completed and rededicated), while 26 courthouses have received emergency or planning grants to complete priority projects. In 2005, we created the Texas Courthouse Stewardship Program to prevent restored buildings from falling back into a state of deferred maintenance and disrepair. The THCPP has received honor awards from the Texas Society of Architects and National Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as the Preserve America Presidential Award. In 2012, Texas' historic courthouses were collectively named National Treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For more achievements, see the testimonials (page 9) and economic impact figures (back cover).

Despite the accomplishments, there is much left to do. Sixty-four counties have approved master plans, but need state grant funding to complete restoration. Ten additional counties submitted master plans that have not yet been approved. And 102 statutorily eligible historic courthouses remain in various states of disrepair in counties that, to date, have chosen not to participate in the THCPP. With legislative support, we look forward to an ongoing state-county partnership designed to save as many as possible of these truly unique Texas architectural treasures.

RESTORATIONS UNDERWAY: **FALLS** | **FANNIN**
LIPSCOMB | **LYNN** | **MARION** | **SAN SABA**



PRESERVATION WORKS IN ALBANY

It's been nearly 20 years since the first courthouse restored through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP) was rededicated. The Shackelford County Courthouse restoration has helped revitalize Albany's historic downtown and spurred economic development in the area.

A spirited crowd gathered on the courthouse lawn on June 30, 2001, to hear state and local officials describe the unprecedented approach of using state funds and expertise to properly restore one of these iconic historic structures. The THCPP, officially launched in 1999 by former Governor George W. Bush, would go on to support nearly 100 counties

(and counting) with its preservation efforts.

Like Albany, many of these communities have experienced boosts in heritage-related investments and economic development since their courthouses were restored. "Albany continues to take pride that its courthouse was the first to benefit from the THC's courthouse preservation program," said Margaret Hoogstra, executive director of the THC's Texas Forts Trail Region, which includes Shackelford County and 28 others in Central-West Texas. "The downtown area remains a vibrant destination, with several buildings being restored and repurposed." For example, Hoogstra notes the

recent opening of the Blue Duck Winery on the courthouse square. Located in an 1870s former mercantile store with a THC marker at the entrance, the winery offers a prime example of heritage tourism trends. Blue Duck's owners chose the former store as a business site for its historic appeal and connection to Albany's cattle-related heritage.

The winery is especially busy in late June, when Albany hosts its major historical event of the year—the Fort Griffin Fandangle. This 80-

1. Rededication ceremony in 2001
2. Vintage Vanilla & Erlene's Specialty Shop
3. Former County Judge Ross Montgomery receives Award of Merit for his commitment to courthouse preservation
4. Fort Griffin Fandangle

year tradition celebrates the Texas frontier legacy with a parade and outdoor musical performance featuring livestock, covered wagons, and living historians that draw more than 10,000 revelers annually.

A significant portion of the Fandangle activity takes place a mile west of town on the acre-sized Prairie Theater. The show attracts travelers from the region who support the local economy by spending on lodging, food, and shopping in the region. Visitors also travel to nearby Fort Griffin State Historic Site, one of the THC's 22 historic properties. While there, they can see the Official State of Texas Longhorn Herd, tour the site's former military buildings, and attend stargazing parties.

Just a block north of the Shackelford County Courthouse is another local business that benefits from Albany's vibrant heritage tourism. Vintage Vanilla & Erlene's Specialty Shop is housed in a historic former pharmacy building, ideally suited for its soda fountain, light lunch, and antique shopping offerings.

Albany visitors often begin their day at its centerpiece, experiencing the 1884 grandeur of the courthouse, including an impressive Second Empire-style tower, detailed cornice brackets, and sturdy limestone from a nearby quarry. Shackelford County—named in honor of Texas Revolution hero Dr. Jack Shackelford, who was spared execution in the Goliad Massacre—was officially organized in 1874. A year later, the county constructed a modest two-room, cedar picket courthouse in the downtown square. In 1883, the wooden structure was moved and rebuilt nearby as a boarding house for the new courthouse construction workers, many of whom were "kilted Scottish

masons," according to the site's THC historical marker.

The county hired James Edward Flanders, a Dallas-based designer with no formal architectural training, to create plans for the new courthouse. Flanders designed numerous other courthouses, most of which are long gone, making this surviving example from the "Golden Age" of Texas courthouses even more special.

The 2001 THCPP-grant-funded project restored the district courtroom, corridors, and 15 office spaces by adding new features such as an ADA ramp, elevator, and electrical, mechanical, and fire-detection systems, as well as reproduced historic features such as the ornate entry doors, pressed metal and beadboard ceilings, a decorative stair handrail, wood windows, and interior shutters. In 2018, the county completed maintenance on the building, including exterior repainting and repairs, earning the county the THC's 2019 Texas Courthouse Stewardship Award.

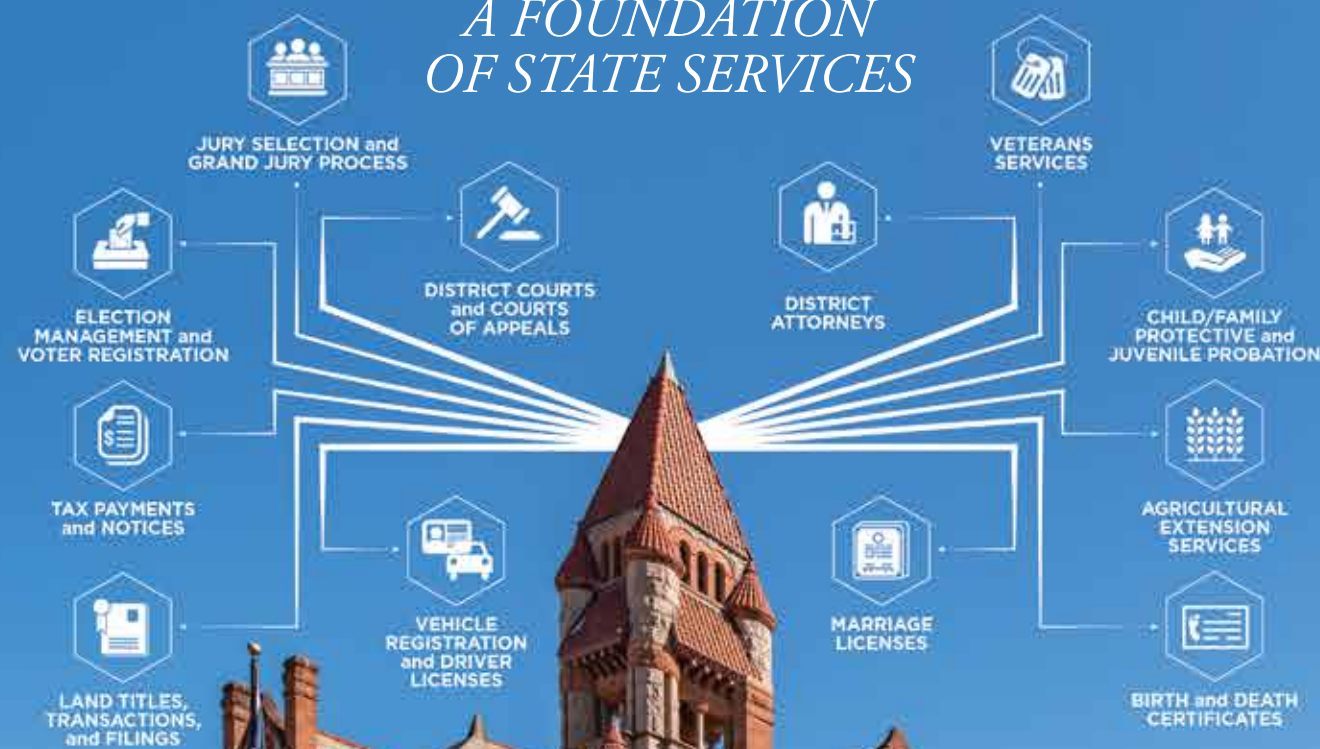
"The Shackelford County Courthouse is a remarkable example of our Courthouse Preservation Program's economic success," said Sharon Fleming, the program's director. "Even as the restoration was being planned, people in Albany and the surrounding area were buzzing about the activity and new opportunities it would bring to the area. Since it was the first courthouse rededicated, it remains a landmark achievement and positive example of revitalization the program has always been designed to accomplish."



The Shackelford County Courthouse in Albany is located in the Texas Forts Trail Region.

COUNTY COURTHOUSES

A FOUNDATION OF STATE SERVICES



The Hopkins County Courthouse in Sulphur Springs is located in the Texas Lakes Trail Region.

TESTIMONIALS



"I believe the courthouse restoration was the key to the revitalization of Denton. It was huge for us because we created a showplace that triggered businesses wanting to come to Denton and open up downtown."

DANNY BRUMLEY
Denton County
Facilities Director



"Our county courthouses are our history and heritage. Failing to preserve and keep them functional is, to me, dishonoring our past. Thanks to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, we can keep their beauty and usefulness alive!"

H.M. DAVENPORT
Navarro County Judge



"The courthouse restoration brought a lot of new businesses to the town center. It literally brought the town back from the dead."

BARBARA YOUNG
Former chair of the Wharton
County Courthouse Committee



"The courthouse restoration was a catalyst that really helped redevelop downtown. It was the basis for a long-range plan for the revitalization of the downtown area and resulted in a reinvestment of \$9 million in a two-year period."

DR. BARBARA WELDER
Former chair of the Bee County
Historical Commission

SAFE AND SECURE

BALANCING CURRENT SECURITY NEEDS WITH HISTORIC FEATURES IN SAN ANTONIO'S BEXAR COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Times have changed. Elected county officials and their staffs no longer conduct their duties free of worry about protestors, vandals, or even violence. Under the Courthouse Security Act of 2017, county officials are now faced with making decisions about how to enhance security to respond to these potential threats—but does that

mean they have to trade the historic character and attractiveness of their county's pride and joy? Since its inception, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has recognized the importance of incorporating best-practice security measures into its grant-funded work. And while

most physical alterations to historic courthouses require THC approval in advance, the THC's courthouse program staff can help counties make necessary security upgrades while preserving historically significant features. The Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio—one of the largest



1. New high-security Presiding Courtroom suite
2. Court security staff at entry checkpoint
3. Upgraded historic holding cell



The Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

in Texas, with 30 courtrooms—constantly faces safety and security challenges. Each day, many uniformed and plain-clothed guards are on security detail in and around the 268,000-square-foot historic courthouse and 300,000-square-foot justice center, monitoring more than 3 million visitors per year.

Although not originally used as a courtroom, the 9,200-square-foot Presiding Court's 2012 rehabilitation illustrates best practices for courtroom security in a historic courthouse. In this busy courtroom, a judge may see 400 attorneys and clients each day. Previously, main hallways were congested with dozens of people waiting for their docket call. As former Director of Infrastructure Services Betty Bueché describes, the rehabilitation project's intent was to make the courtroom "as functional and hospitable as possible." Now, attorneys and clients can confer privately in newly accessible designated rooms or gather in a new general waiting area.

Located on the first floor and only 10 feet from a public street, the

Presiding Courtroom now meets consultant recommendations for bullet-proof rather than bomb-proof level construction. The THC reviewed and approved all specific alterations of the courthouse's historic features to ensure alterations met the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Improvements included bullet-resistant interior glazing panels on windows, which saved their historic appearance while unobtrusively providing needed protection. Level III bullet-resistant materials concealed within the back wall of the courtroom and the bench provide safe harbor for judicial staff, while panic buttons abound.

Improvements don't just keep the bad guys out—they make sure offenders awaiting hearings are kept in. Historic holding cells on the 2nd and 4th floors are still used and have been updated to meet Texas Department of Criminal Justice requirements. Finally, the Office of Court Security is vigilant in policing activities in and around the complex through interior and exterior videography, which is recorded and monitored at all times.



No perfect conditions exist in any public place, but measures can be taken to reduce risks by incorporating new approaches, technology, and common sense into the way Texas' historic courthouses are used.

BREATHING NEW LIFE

ROUND IX COMPLETION AND PROGRESS

KARNES

On an unusually brisk April afternoon, county residents packed the courthouse square in Karnes City to celebrate one of the most dramatic transformations in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program's (THCPP) 20 years. Preservationists and members of the community first partnered with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in 2004, when they applied for and received a \$100,000 planning grant from the THCPP. Over the next 10 years, an annex replaced nonfunctional additions, and then Karnes County was awarded a final \$3.9 million grant to fully restore the building to its 1894 architectural magnificence. The 14-year project is considered

one of the most challenging in the program's history. In 1920, the county renovated the courthouse into what was considered to be a modern building for the time—removing many of its Romanesque-Revival features, including the clock tower and turrets, and adding a red-tile roof and plaster exterior. Because the dramatic 1920 makeover also left the courthouse with severe foundation issues, restoring the structural integrity of the building was prioritized, along with the initial architectural design. Today, the original Victorian beauty of the Karnes County Courthouse has been reclaimed, including the four brick chimneys, slate tile roof, historic landscaping, and iconic

clock tower. Inside, the original wood flooring has been salvaged and reinstalled in the main courtroom, along with reconstructions of the historic courtroom furniture.

The restored courthouse—now a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Antiquities Landmark, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places—sits atop a hill where it can be seen from miles away in any direction, serving as a beacon of this small Texas community's tenacity and dedication.



The Karnes County Courthouse in Karnes City is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.

FANNIN

Much like the Karnes County Courthouse, the Fannin County Courthouse in Bonham joined the THCPP as a building that no longer reflects its original design. Since its construction in 1888, attempts to modernize and remedy natural disasters stripped the Second Empire-style building of most of its original features. Efforts to restore the Roxton limestone structure to its original 1888 appearance are underway thanks to a \$5.3 million full restoration grant from Round IX.



The Fannin County Courthouse in Bonham is located in the Texas Lakes Trail Region.

LYNN

The Lynn County Courthouse in Tahoka is an excellent example of Classical Revival-style architecture commonly found in the Texas Panhandle at the turn of the 20th century. Unusual for many of these types of buildings, the Lynn County Courthouse retains all of its original exterior and interior structural fabric. The project is reversing minimal modifications made to the building over the years, including window and door replacements, as well as the 1960 jail annex and a highway that bisected the square.



The Lynn County Courthouse in Tahoka is located in the Texas Plains Trail Region.

SAN SABA

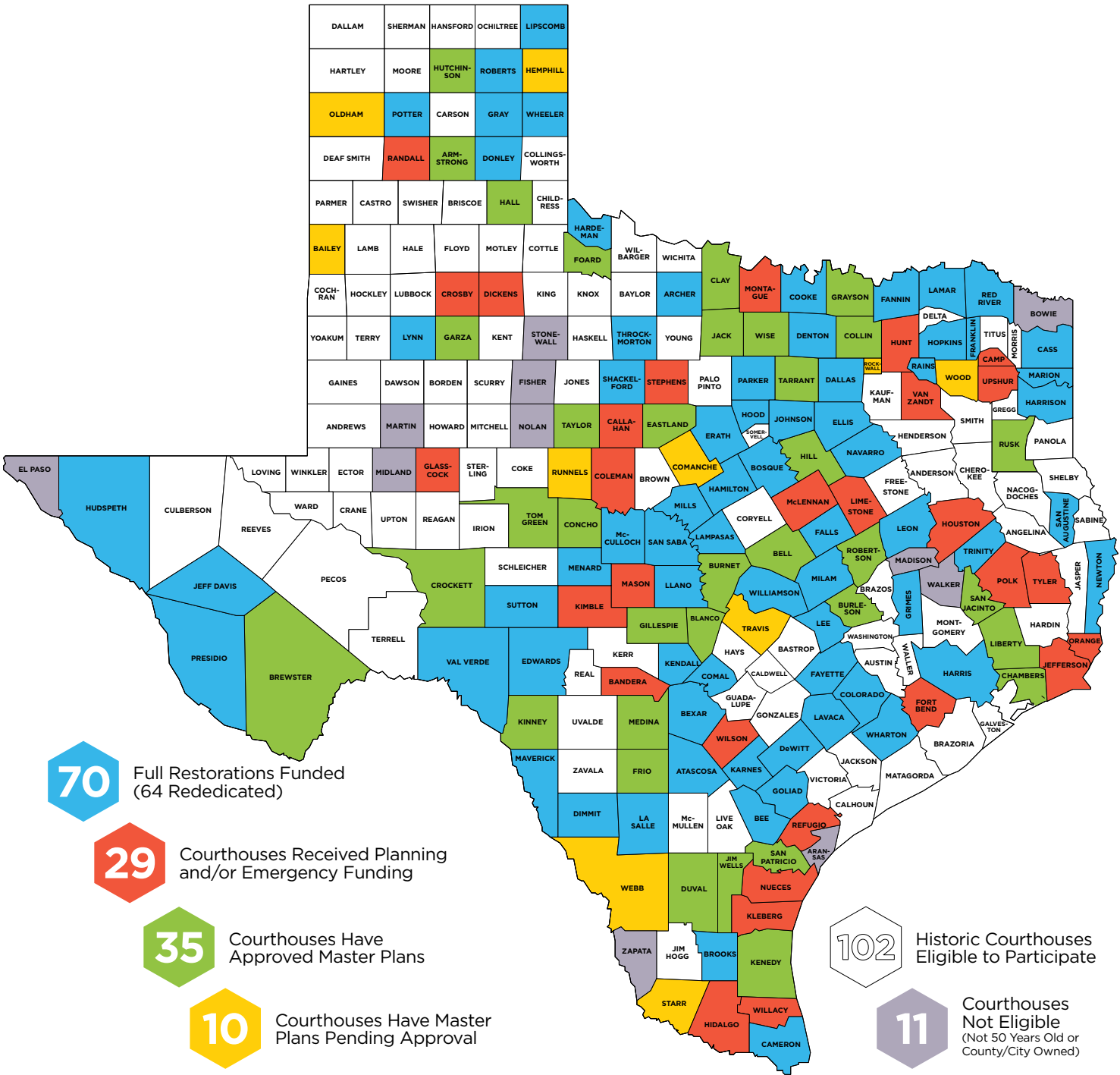
Considered a premier example of Texas Renaissance style, the San Saba County Courthouse in San Saba is beloved for its domed clock tower, two-story columns, and a prominent inscription reading, "FROM THE PEOPLE TO THE PEOPLE," located beneath a large Texas star. Since receiving a full restoration grant in Round IX, contractors are working to restore the courthouse's exterior features, install cooling and heating, and return the third-floor courtroom to its former double height.



The San Saba County Courthouse in San Saba is located in the Texas Forts Trail Region.



TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM



PROJECTS FUNDED FROM 1999 TO 2018

FULLY RESTORED COURTHOUSES

County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built	County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built
Archer	Archer City	5/12/05	1891	Johnson	Cleburne	12/1/07	1913
Atascosa	Jourdanton	6/14/03	1912	Karnes	Karnes City	4/7/18	1894
Bee	Beeville	5/20/06	1913	Kendall	Boerne	4/10/10	1870
Bexar	San Antonio	7/14/15	1896	La Salle	Cotulla	1/26/13	1931
Bosque	Meridian	9/22/07	1886	Lamar	Paris	9/3/05	1917
Brooks	Falfurrias	2/26/10	1914	Lampasas	Lampasas	3/2/04	1883
Cameron	Brownsville	10/17/06	1912	Lavaca	Hallettsville	9/11/10	1897
Cass	Linden	2/18/12	1861	Lee	Giddings	10/8/04	1899
Colorado	Columbus	5/17/14	1891	Leon	Centerville	7/1/07	1887
Comal	New Braunfels	1/22/13	1898	Llano	Llano	6/15/02	1892
Cooke	Gainesville	11/12/11	1911	Maverick	Eagle Pass	10/13/05	1885
Dallas	Dallas	5/15/07	1892	McCulloch	Brady	9/5/09	1899
Denton	Denton	11/6/04	1896	Menard	Menard	11/11/06	1932
DeWitt	Cuero	10/27/07	1896	Milam	Cameron	7/4/02	1892
Dimmit	Carrizo Springs	11/18/04	1884	Mills	Goldthwaite	8/27/11	1913
Donley	Clarendon	7/4/03	1894	Navarro	Corsicana	7/9/16	1905
Edwards	Rocksprings	7/5/14	1891	Newton	Newton	12/8/12	1903
Ellis	Waxahachie	10/4/03	1897	Parker	Weatherford	6/4/05	1886
Erath	Stephenville	8/20/02	1892	Potter	Amarillo	8/18/12	1932
Fayette	La Grange	6/25/05	1891	Presidio	Marfa	1/5/02	1886
Franklin	Mount Vernon	9/20/14	1912	Rains	Emory	10/17/10	1909
Goliad	Goliad	12/4/03	1894	Red River	Clarksville	10/26/02	1884
Gray	Pampa	4/12/03	1928	Roberts	Miami	6/2/12	1913
Grimes	Anderson	3/2/02	1894	San Augustine	San Augustine	11/20/10	1928
Hamilton	Hamilton	4/28/12	1887	Shackelford	Albany	6/30/01	1883
Hardeman	Quanah	5/9/14	1908	Sutton	Sonora	6/11/02	1891
Harris	Houston	8/23/11	1910	Throckmorton	Throckmorton	3/12/15	1891
Harrison	Marshall	6/20/09	1901	Trinity	Groveton	7/22/11	1914
Hood	Granbury	10/27/12	1891	Val Verde	Del Rio	7/23/04	1887
Hopkins	Sulphur Springs	12/7/02	1894	Wharton	Wharton	8/4/07	1889
Hudspeth	Sierra Blanca	7/3/04	1920	Wheeler	Wheeler	10/16/04	1925
Jeff Davis	Fort Davis	11/8/03	1910	Williamson	Georgetown	12/8/07	1911

CURRENT FULL RESTORATION GRANTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Falls	Marlin	In Progress	1940
Fannin	Bonham	In Progress	1889
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	In Progress	1916
Lynn	Tahoka	In Progress	1916
Marion	Jefferson	In Progress	1912
San Saba	San Saba	In Progress	1911

CURRENT EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Cameron	Brownsville	In Progress	1912
Camp	Pittsburg	In Progress	1929
Coleman	Coleman	In Progress	1884
Goliad	Goliad	In Progress	1894
Kimble	Junction	In Progress	1930
Kleberg	Kingsville	In Progress	1914
Limestone	Groesbeck	In Progress	1924
Milam	Cameron	In Progress	1892
Orange	Orange	In Progress	1937
Refugio	Refugio	In Progress	1917
Willacy	Raymondville	In Progress	1922

CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Callahan	Baird	In Progress	1929
Polk	Livingston	In Progress	1923
Van Zandt	Canton	In Progress	1937

PREVIOUS PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Crosby	Crosbyton	Complete	1914
Fort Bend	Richmond	Complete	1909
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Mason	Mason	Complete	1910
Stephens	Breckenridge	Complete	1926
Upshur	Gilmer	Complete	1933

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Bandera	Bandera	Complete	1891
Callahan	Baird	Complete	1929
Dickens	Dickens	Complete	1893
Glasscock	Garden City	Complete	1894
Hidalgo	Hidalgo	Complete	1886
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Jefferson	Beaumont	Complete	1932
Limestone	Groesbeck	Complete	1924
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	Complete	1916
Mason	Mason	Complete	1910
McLennan	Waco	Complete	1901
Montague	Montague	Complete	1913
Nueces	Corpus Christi	Complete	1914
Polk	Livingston	Complete	1923
Randall	Canyon	Complete	1908
Tyler	Woodville	Complete	1891
Upshur	Gilmer	Complete	1933
Wilson	Floresville	Complete	1884



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF RESTORED TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSES



Since 1999
**10,898
jobs**

created through courthouse
preservation projects



**\$612
million**

in income generated



**\$44
million**

in state and local taxes
generated



**\$750
million**

in gross state product



Direct travel
spending in Texas
\$74.7 billion

Restored Texas courthouses are popular heritage tourism destinations. Harrison County Courthouse's Wonderland of Lights holiday festival is visited by at least 100,000 people, with more than a third of them from out of town.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM ACROSS THE STATE

- An example of how a Texas community can benefit from its courthouse restoration is Lampasas, which now has more than nine events on the courthouse square that draw about 9,000 people annually.
- Following the full restoration of the 1913 Bee County Courthouse, which was rededicated in 2006, downtown Beeville saw a reinvestment of \$9 million during a two-year period.
- The 1911 Williamson County Courthouse in Georgetown hosts many events, such as the popular Red Poppy Festival and the annual Lighting of the Square. In 2017, about 1,800 people toured the building and roughly 94,000 people attended events on the courthouse square or lawn.
- Since 1999, 99 counties have received grants for their courthouse projects. 64 have been fully restored, with six more in progress. The state awarded \$291 million in grants from 1999–2018, with counties matching \$244 million. 74 counties have committed local funds and need state grants.

Visit us at thc.texas.gov/courthouses and on social media.

